

## 25th Anniversary Celebration! 17th Annual SIC Conference - March 22, 2003 *"Your Voice Matters"*

Twenty-five years ago School Improvement Councils came into being in South Carolina. The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual SIC Conference will be a very special celebration of the contributions of SICs in past years and will serve as a call to action for future years. The theme of the conference, "Your Voice Matters!" urges SIC members to share their experience and commitment to the education of our state's children with their elected officials. Grassroots involvement is the key to education reform and this conference will give council members the information and skills they need to be effective advocates for education in general, for their local schools, and their own children.

### KEYNOTEADDRESS

Have you ever wanted to share your opinion on a proposed law or policy affecting your school with a lawmaker but weren't sure how to go about it? Keynote speaker Anton J. Gunn will empower participants with skills to communicate with elected officials. He'll explain why it is so important that they hear from you. Mr. Gunn is an experienced public



*Anton J. Gunn*

policy analyst and community advocate for social and economic justice. He is the executive director of South Carolina Fair Share, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, statewide organization that works to create and sustain citizen participation in government. Fair Share investigates problems, educates the public about solutions, and works for reforms that focus on everyday people in the Palmetto state. Prior to his work at Fair Share, Mr. Gunn was on the staff of the Alliance for South Carolina's Children,

where he advocated for children and families on a variety of issues. He has also worked for the Center for Community Change in Washington, D.C. Mr. Gunn will inspire you with his passion and, with the help of Fair Share staff and friends, he will demonstrate how to get involved, through a series of entertaining and informative skits.

### 25th ANNIVERSARY AWARDS LUNCHEON

SIC members who attended last year's conference were delighted with the opportunity to see former South Carolina Governor and US Secretary of Education Richard Riley and his wife, Tunk, accept an award named for them in honor of the many contributions they both have made to education improvement in South Carolina. This year, Secretary and Mrs. Riley will be in attendance to present the first "Dick and Tunk Riley School Improvement Award" to an outstanding School Improvement Council. Finalists for the award will receive



*Dick and Tunk Riley*

honorable mention status. Also present for the luncheon will be a variety of leaders who played key roles in the establishment, implementation, and growth of councils as we celebrate 25 Years of School Improvement Councils.

### CLOSING MESSAGE

Dr. Ronald L. Epps leads by the African proverb "After the mountains, more mountains." Dr. Epps, superintendent of Richland School District One, believes that

an active, grassroots constituency can help move the mountains that stand between children and their prosperity. And, in Richland One, many mountains have been moved.

In his endnote address, Dr. Epps will discuss the grassroots support that led to the recent passage of a \$381 million bond referendum to upgrade the district's secondary schools.



*Dr. Ronald Epps*

He will also tell the story of how Richland One courageously turned down a lucrative soft drink pouring-rights contract, in light of the connection between poor nutrition and the increasing incidence of diabetes and other health problems among children. The district later implemented a highly acclaimed policy that took soft drinks out of the vending machines and put more healthy items on school cafeteria menus.

### REGISTER TODAY

"Your Voice Matters!" will be held on Saturday, March 22 at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Columbia. Registration is limited to 500, so please take a minute to register today. See page 3 for additional conference information. A registration form can be found on page 5 and also on line at [www.ed.sc.edu/sic](http://www.ed.sc.edu/sic).

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## Message from . . . the Executive Director

"School Improvement Councils Celebrate 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in South Carolina." That's how the headline could read. "Twenty five years?" asked a colleague of mine recently. Yes, it all started 25 years ago when it was considered a good idea to have a few parents and community members join educators (and high school students) to review the program of the school. It's still a good idea.

In those 25 years, the General Assembly has increased the role and the responsibilities of the SIC in the efforts to improve and be accountable for the education of the students at their school. Also on the increase was the amount of information learned, skills gained, and influence exercised by council members to build a collaborative team that incorporated all of the parties interested in school improvement. Thanks to all who have served on School Improvement Councils and thanks to the school leadership that has made the SIC a partner in the improvement process.

South Carolina School Improvement Council will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the annual SIC Conference and I hope as many SIC members as possible will join us on March 22 in Columbia. We are honoring the influential role of councils through the conference theme, "Your Voice Matters!" We will honor one SIC with the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award for their outstanding accomplishments for their school. The Rileys will make the presentation.

Celebrate the SIC at your school, in your community, and in your district. Honor those who have worked to grow your council into an important vehicle for school improvements. Share the accomplishments that the council has supported, advocated, and assisted to implement over the years. And then look to the future. Celebrations are a great way to involve others in the vision of future school improvement.

Happy Anniversary!

### SIC State Meeting!

Tuesday, February 18, 2003  
Live! 7 – 8 PM

Legislative Issues and Update  
Quality Teachers – Get & Keep  
Truancy – Who's Problem?  
Fathers in Children's Education

SC ETV broadcast via satellite  
Closed circuit channel D-303

Rebroadcast Friday, February 28  
10 – 11 AM; Channel D-310

What are your concerns on these topics?  
Email them to [sic@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:sic@gwm.sc.edu)

For more information 800-868-2232.

## SIC Action Timeline



Mark your calendar and plan for the important activities and deadlines below:

### FEBRUARY

- Distribute *Report to the Parents* by **Feb. 1** to all students' families; place copies in grocery stores, doctors' and dentists' offices, and other community businesses. Send a copy of your report to SC-SIC.
- Watch and/or record the *SIC State Meeting* on **Feb. 18** (see box on this page).
- Register SIC members for annual *SIC Conference* on March 22 in Columbia.
- Study analysis of teacher, student, and parent survey responses to discover gaps between groups and identify areas to direct improvement efforts.
- Continue to monitor implementation of school improvement strategies.
- Plan ways to communicate to parents and community members the Report Card information and the importance of their participation for improvement.

### MARCH

- Tune in to "Speaking of Schools" **March 10** to hear about 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of SICs. (See **FYI** p. 6 for local radio stations.)
- Attend annual *SIC Conference* and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of SIC's in SC on **March 22** at the Sheraton Hotel in Columbia.
- Continue to monitor implementation of school improvement strategies.
- Identify what information will be needed to document progress of strategies at the end of the year.
- Monitor budget process in the district and the state for impact on your school's improvement progress.

### APRIL

- Tune in to SIC state meeting **April 10** on ETV closed circuit channel D-303.
- Gather and analyze information to document or evaluate strategy progress.
- Compile gathered data/information for inclusion in the annual update of the improvement plan.
- Sponsor awareness and preparation sessions for parents about the importance of the upcoming PACT testing and how to support students when tests are given.
- Plan for Spring SIC elections; solicit nominations from feeder schools if applicable.

REMINDER: The SC-SIC website address has changed! Please update your web bookmark to [www.ed.sc.edu/sic](http://www.ed.sc.edu/sic).



## **Conference Agenda**

8:15 AM	<i>Registration: Exhibits Open and Breakfast</i>
9:15 AM	<i>General Session: “Your Voice Matters!” Keynote Address – Mr. Anton J. Gunn</i>
10:45 AM	<i>Break: Visit Exhibits</i>
11:00 AM	<i>Workshop Session I</i>
12:15 PM	<i>Awards Luncheon Presentation: Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award Presented by Secretary and Mrs. Riley</i>
1:15 PM	<i>Break: Visit Exhibits</i>
1:30 PM	<i>Workshop Session II</i>
2:30 PM	<i>Break: Visit Exhibits</i>
2:45 PM	<i>Closing Session: “After the Mountains, More Mountains” Endnote Address – Dr. Ronald Epps</i>

## **THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!**

“This year’s conference exemplifies the deep commitment to education we have in South Carolina,” says Cassie Barber, SC-SIC associate director and conference coordinator. “State budget cuts might have meant the elimination of the Annual SIC Conference or perhaps a scaled down event, but several generous sponsors have stepped forward to ensure that this year’s SIC conference will be the high quality event council members deserve and have come to expect.”

Co-sponsors for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration include: **Communities in Schools – SC; Southeast United Dairy Industry Association;** Columbia law firm **Nelson Mullins Riley and Scarborough;** and **AARP South Carolina.** “With the help of these co-sponsors, the SIC conference will offer informative and inspiring speakers, fourteen workshops, exhibits, materials, breakfast and lunch, all for a registration fee of \$30,” said Barber. “SC-SIC is committed to keeping the registration fee low so that all SIC members, whether they are parents, community members, teachers or students can afford to attend.”

Winter 2003

## **Workshop Sampler** **“ Your Voice Matters! ”** **17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

Conference attendees will have the opportunity to attend two workshop sessions from a field of fourteen. Below is a sample of the workshops that will inform, engage and challenge your School Improvement Council.

### **Habits of Highly Effective SIC Members**

This interactive presentation provides an overview of the personal growth model presented in the highly acclaimed book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. The importance of individual habits in developing leadership skills is emphasized. Ed Cox, Department of Educational Leadership and Policies, College of Education, USC will provide personal application and illustrations.

### **Lovely Acres: A Community Empowerment Simulation**

Join keynote speaker Anton J. Gunn for an entertaining and enlightening hour learning how to bring your community together for positive change. Participate in a role-play exercise to learn the ins and outs of grassroots advocacy.

### **Harness Volunteer Power in Your Community**

The Junior League of Columbia will showcase its Smart Matters school readiness program at South Kilbourne Elementary School as an example of how you can make the most of volunteers in your community. See how a volunteer organization and a school with limited funding collaborated, defined their roles and responsibilities, and partnered to positively impact school readiness.

### **Non-Traditional Methods of Fundraising for Schools**

With increased cuts in education funding, schools are looking for new ways to raise money such as major gifts and annual giving, methods that colleges and universities have used for years. By using matching gifts, schools can double their dollars. Two schools that have successfully used these methods will be showcased. Presented by Chris Beckham, SIC Chair, Center for Inquiry and Mickey Beckham, Auctus Consulting.

### **A Full Plate: Using a Common Lunch Hour to Enhance the Total School Program**

With support from staff, students, and parents, twelve hundred students can be fed, tutoring and mentoring can be expanded, business partnerships and opportunities can be developed, library usage and student and staff reading increased along with school profits, and clubs and organizations can meet – all in under an hour a day! Presented by the Greenville Senior High School SIC.

### **Building Strong Rural Schools in South Carolina: The Foundations We Need**

Find out what the South Carolina Rural Education Grassroots Committee discovered when it commissioned this study of rural education in South Carolina with support from the Rural School and Community Trust and the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center. The study presents a series of recommendations to strengthen rural education; find out what they said about SICs!

Other topics to explore: No Child Left Behind; Report from the Education Oversight Committee; Six Types of Parent Involvement; Legislative Update and MORE!



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award winning publication of SC  
School Improvement Council.  
Circulation 16,500. Your comments  
and articles are welcome.  
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## SC Fatherhood Programs Reach White House

A primary indicator of child and family poverty is father absence and research has shown that fathers can be key to student achievement. Yet schools have traditionally focused on mothers and human service agencies have often taken a punitive approach in dealing with fathers. The social service system is now being urged to adopt more supportive methods of serving men and their families. In response to the growing needs of human service professionals, the South Carolina Fatherhood Practitioners Network, Inc. (SCFPN) has been developed to establish and maintain a network of professionals, individuals, and organizations to work with fathers and families in South Carolina.



*President Bush meets with Patrick Patterson*

SCFPN grew out of the Fatherhood Initiative spearheaded by the Sisters of Charity Foundation, which has funded thirteen fatherhood programs across the state. These programs have proven so successful, that Patrick Patterson, program manager at the Foundation, was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion with the president of the United States. President George W. Bush and Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson visited South Carolina last summer to discuss welfare reform issues. Patterson presented fatherhood programs as an alternative to incarcerating fathers who fall behind on child support. These programs not only reduce childhood poverty, they improve children's lives in countless ways by ensuring that their fathers are present in their lives.

SCFPN and the Foundation are sponsoring a conference, *"Dads Make a Difference, Making the Connection One Father at a Time,"* on February 27 & 28 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel Myrtle Beach Convention Center. Speakers include Jonetta Rose Barras, Wally Amos, and Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. To learn more about fatherhood programs in South Carolina, attend the conference or join the SCFPN, contact Patrick Patterson at (803) 254-0230.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The SC General Assembly has reconvened and some of the education bills proposed so far include making the State Superintendent of Education an appointed position (H3107), eliminating the State Board of Education (H3378), ending school on the last day of PACT testing (S237), and substituting band for PE (H3127).

Lawmakers will be dealing with the heated issue of a proposed uniform start date for SC schools. Last December, the State Board of Education voted to implement a mandatory start time within a two-week window. Many school districts are opposed to this measure, which led to the introduction of a spate of bills requesting that individual districts be able to set their own start dates. In January the SC Attorney General's office found that the State Board exceeded its authority in this regard. The debate continues.

How schools will fare in the state budget during this lean year is likely to be a priority concern for most parents and community members. Local schools have had to implement a variety of cutback measures including laying off personnel, turning down the heat, and increasing class size.

The public can keep track of education issues through a variety of websites. The State Department of Education has a new legislative link on [www.myscschools.com](http://www.myscschools.com) that provides information on House and Senate Bills, local education bills, links to education legislation and regulations that have been submitted to the General Assembly. A variety of professional associations also feature education legislation on their websites including the SC School Boards Association, [www.scsba.org](http://www.scsba.org); the SC Association of School Administrators, [www.scasa.org](http://www.scasa.org); the SC Education Association, [www.thescea.org](http://www.thescea.org) and the Palmetto State Teachers Association, [www.palmettoteachers.org](http://www.palmettoteachers.org).

# 17<sup>th</sup> Annual SIC Conference and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

## “ Your Voice Matters! ”

March 22, 2003

Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center  
Bush River Road at I-20  
Columbia, SC  
803-731-0300

- Registration fee is \$30.00 per person. This includes conference materials, breakfast and luncheon. Only ONE completed registration form for EACH person will be accepted, so please copy this form as needed.
- Your registration is not complete until you have received a confirmation by phone or e-mail.
- On-site registrations will NOT be accepted.
- No registrations will be accepted after deadlines.
- QUESTIONS? Contact us at 803-777-7658 or 800-868-2232.

- Ways to register:
  - *US regular mail:* send your completed registration form and payment/purchase order information, postmarked NO LATER THAN Friday, March 14, 2003 to the address on the registration form.
  - *Fax* completed forms to 803-777-0023  
*Faxed registration deadline:* 5:00 pm on Monday, March 17, 2003.

### \* REGISTRATION FORM \*

Name (last)\_\_\_\_\_ (first)\_\_\_\_\_  
( ) *Parent* ( ) *Teacher* ( ) *Administrator* ( ) *Student* ( ) *Community Member* ( ) *Other*

Mailing Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

District\_\_\_\_\_ School\_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

Check luncheon entree choice: ( ) **honey pecan chicken** ( ) **pasta primavera**

- Payment in the form of a check, money order or signed purchase order may be mailed or submitted at the door.  
SORRY, NO CASH or CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED.

*PAYMENT METHOD* — Please designate below how your registration fee will be paid.

- ( ) *check enclosed/will bring* ( ) *district/school to pay fee*  
( ) *money order/will bring* purchase order number\_\_\_\_\_ or  
authorizing signature\_\_\_\_\_

**SC-SIC, College of Education  
Room 001, Wardlaw Building  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC 29208**

## National School Board Recognition Month

As citizen leaders, individual school board members face complex and demanding challenges. Yet, few people fully understand the scope and far-reaching implications of board members' responsibilities.

Each January the vital role of school boards in governing America's public schools receives special attention during National School Board Recognition Month. The theme, **Focus-ing on Student Achievement**, emphasizes the primary role of school boards in South Carolina - to assure high academic achievement for all students in a cooperative relationship with their communities.

With the new federal mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act, school boards must make decisions that have enormous consequences for students. They must work with policymakers, parents and community members to ensure that instructional programs and personnel are in place to help all students meet and exceed grade level standards.

The National School Boards Association and the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) annually sponsor School Board Recognition Month. SCSBA provides training, information and other services to assist board members with their duties. The publications, *So you want to run for the board* and *The role and responsibility of a school board member*, are available from SCSBA for those interested in finding out more about school board service. A list of all school board members can be found on [www.scsba.org](http://www.scsba.org). For more information, contact Ellen Henderson, 1.800.326.3679, or [ellenhh@bellsouth.net](mailto:ellenhh@bellsouth.net).

## Council News Can Be Received Electronically

SC-SIC announced last year that in an effort to trim our budget, we would begin to disseminate the *Council News* electronically to school and district personnel and to other SIC members by request. If you would prefer to receive an email with a link to the newsletter on the website, please sign up by sending an email from the email account we should add to our database. Place the words "Electronic Newsletter" in the subject line and send to [whorne@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:whorne@gwm.sc.edu).

## Send Us Your Report to the Parents

Ever wonder how schools in other districts present information about their schools in the Report to the Parents? SC-SIC would like to help SICs throughout the state get new ideas to create effective reports that also serve as an important marketing tool for the school. Please share a copy of your Report to the Parents with us. Each year we will share some of the best reports on our website. Reports can be sent via email in PageMaker or Microsoft Word formats or converted to an Adobe Acrobat file. Send to [sic@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:sic@gwm.sc.edu).

## SC-SIC On Speaking of Schools

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of SICs in South Carolina will be featured on *Speaking of Schools* with Doug Keel on SC NPR on March 10 from 6:30 until 7:00. SICs will be saluted throughout the month of March. Be sure to tune in to your local public radio stations. Area stations include: WLKJ 89.1 FM – Aiken; WSCI 89.3 FM – Charleston; WLTR 91.3 FM - Columbia; WHMC 90.1 FM – Conway; and WEPR 90.1 FM – Greenville.

